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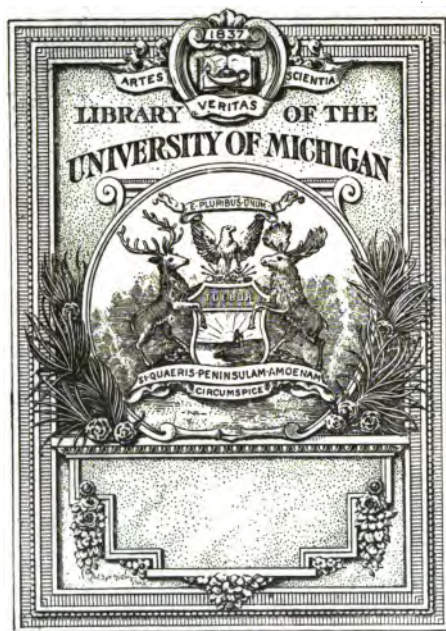
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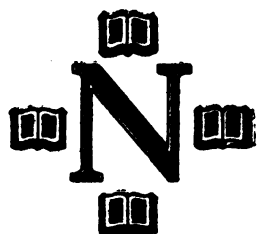
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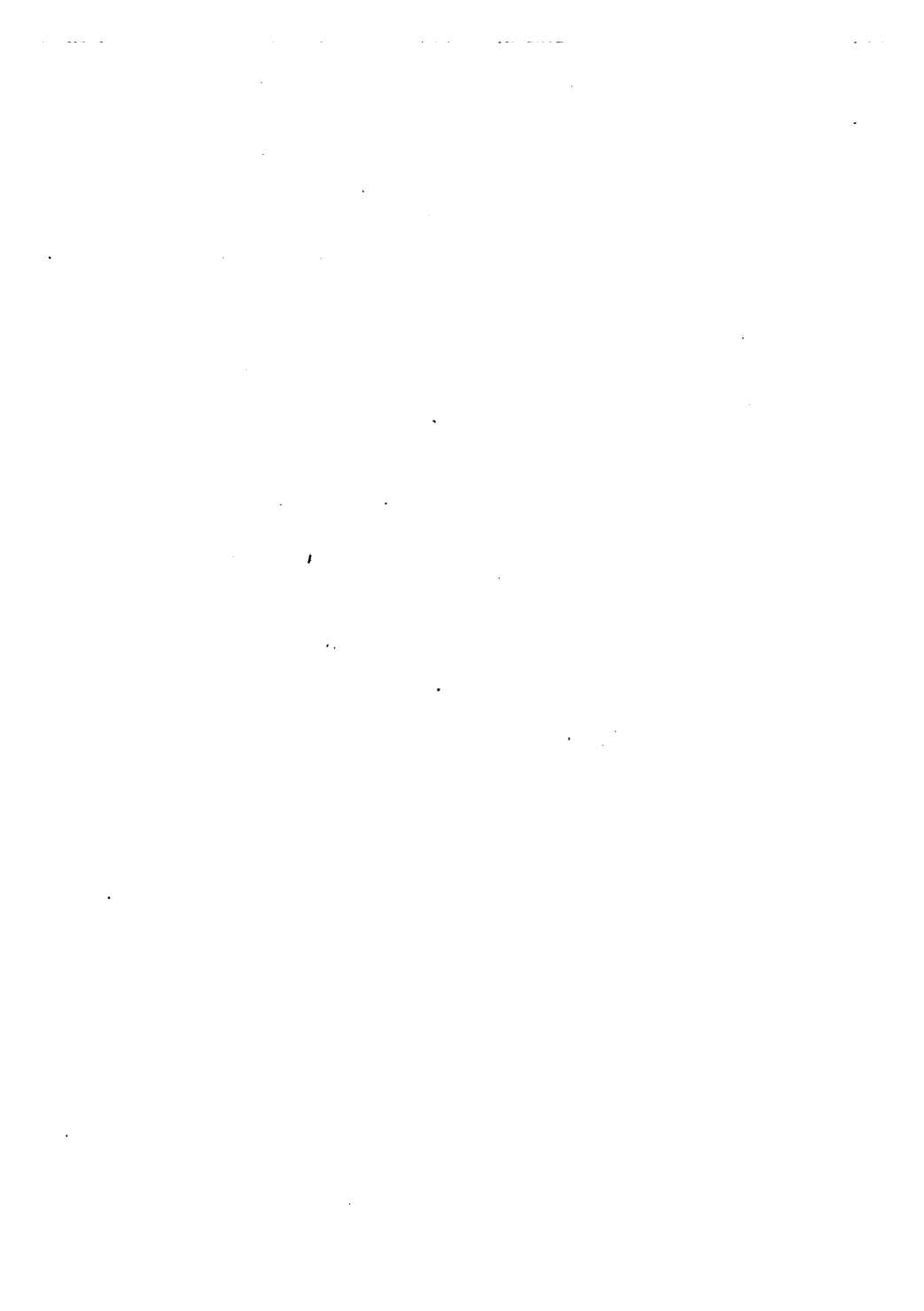
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LOOMS OF LIFE







FRONTISPICE

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W. L. R.



W. L. R.



LOOMS OF LIFE

POEMS

By

HERMAN SCHEFFAUER

Author of "Of Both Worlds," etc.



New York and Washington
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY
1908

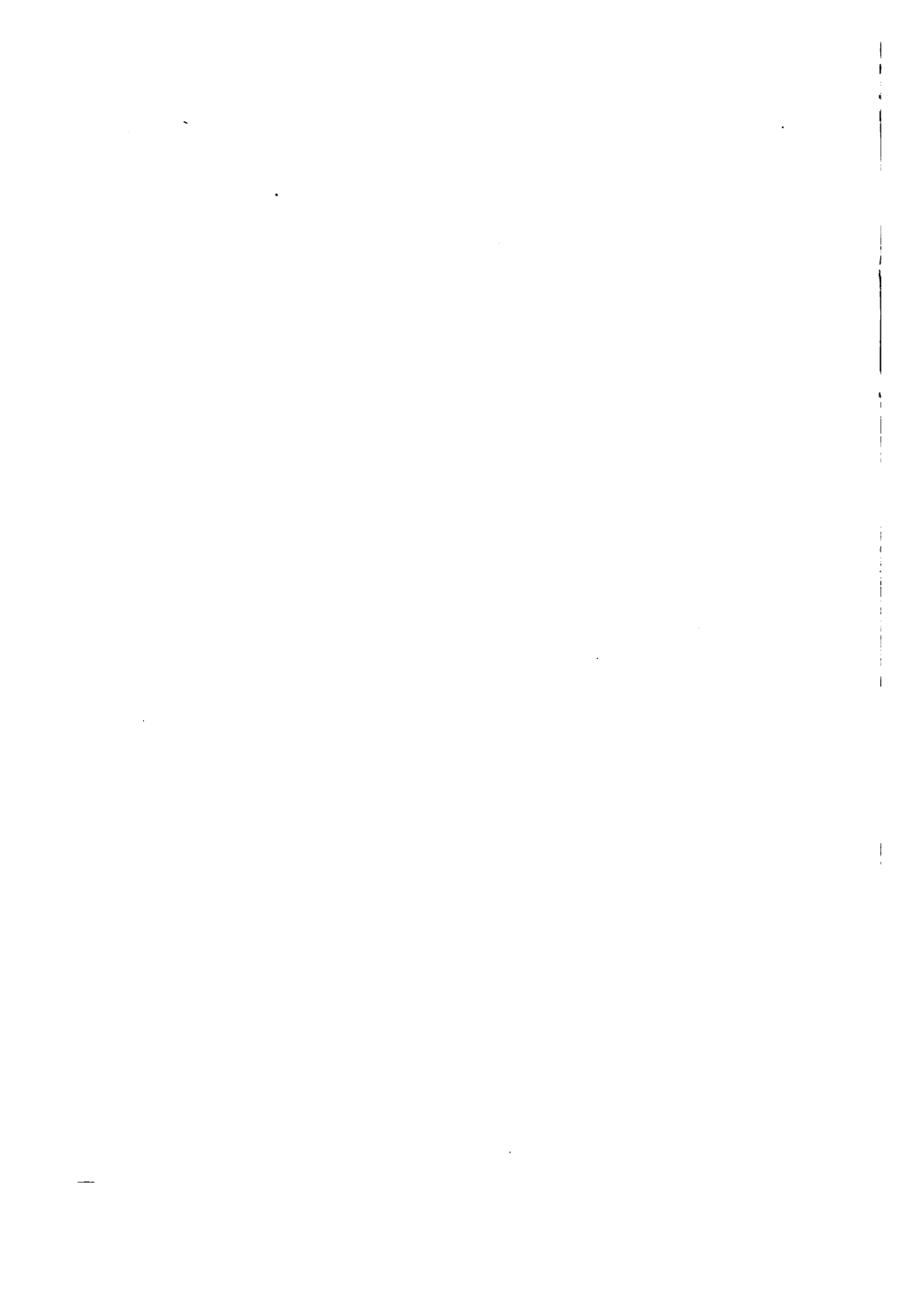
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Proem and Dedication	9
Man and the Mountains	15
The Chant of Man and Woman	19
The Fire Funeral	22
The Song of a Happy Spirit	24
The Symbol in the Cave	27
Atlantis	32
San Francisco Desolate	34
O Evanescence!	37
The Ruined Temple	38
To the Earth-Dæmon	39
The Rhapsodist	41
Keats at Winter Sundown	47
The Tower Garden	48
London in Snow	49
The Sea and the City	51
The Throne of the Storm	52
The Leper of London	53
Manhattan	55
"An Amiable Child"	57
Beauty Trove	59
Assault of Silver	62
Washington Irving	63
The Looms of Life	64
Hymn to the Passing Earth	74
The Master of Magnificence	77

CONTENTS (Continued)

	PAGE
Song of the Sundown	79
Vale, California	81
The Shadow O'er the City	82
London	83
To Mimic Poets	84
To William Butler Yeats	85
Acme!	86
The Sculptured Indian	87
The Pæan of the Poppies	88
The Sierra Snow-Plant	90
The Californian Poppy	91
Mary of Milrone	93
Heights and Depths	100
Architekton	100
Friedrich Nietzsche	101
Prologue in Heaven	102
A Dedication	104
The Quest at End	104
Bianca	106
The Moon Damozel	108
Russia Agonized	110
Souls of Men Asunder	115
How Could Men Hate Thee, Lucifer?	117
The Iron Virgin	123
The Land of Alabaster	126
The Forging of the Rings	127
The Storm-Night	135

PROEM
AND
DEDICATION
TO
E. D.

*When the harps of a land lie forlorn,
And the lips of its minstrels are still,
When the scroll of the poet lies torn,
And his song wakes an echo of scorn,
And the laugh of the fool seeks to kill,—*

*When the Age's grim armor enthralls
Our souls in a bondage of things,
When Mammon squats throned in his halls,
Fenced by ramparts of ore, and his walls
Ring with joy of the pæan he sings,—*

*When the Fathers' dreams trodden in mire,
And the Goddess torn into the dust,
Stamp their shame like a brand of fierce fire
On our brows,—when the chords of the lyre
Are corroded and covered with rust,—*

LOOMS OF LIFE

*Then the gods from their altars withdraw,—
Then the tongues of the prophets of doom
Are laden with dole, and the awe
That once hallowed the Tablets of Law
Is harried by thieves to the tomb.*

*Then the Engine of Gutenberg pours
Its baneful reflex of the Time,
Then the people are smitten with sores,
And the Dome of the Capitol roars
With the shouts of the Caesars of Crime.*

*Then women alone feed the flame
That grows dim on the altar of Art,
Then do men, unashamed in their shame,
Make a traffic of nation and name
With the jackals and wolves of the mart.*

*So no rapture of Music is heard
Save the trivial strain of the lute
Of the rhymesters. The deeps are unstirred
By the storm of some wonderful word,
Since the harp and the harpers are mute;—*

LOOMS OF LIFE

*And blind to the trend of the tides,
To the light still upborne by the years,
To the meaning immortal that bides
Through the ominous noon of new Ides
And the mystic designs of the spheres.*

*They chant treason to Life and their Time,
Chained to gods that sleep realmless and cold,
And weave Dian and Phoebus in rhyme
Out of fables and myths of the Prime
And the legends whose glory is told.*

*Yet no storm from a resonant lyre
Whelms the querulous pipe and the reed,
Yet no anthem uprolls like a fire
From the organ-tubes' thunder; no choir
Hath a voice for our Age and its need.*

*And lo! it hath come that the Stars
O'er the vast, indivisible States
Gleam sick to the world, and the Bars
Of the Standard are spotted, and scars
Vex the flesh of the Eagle. The Fates*

LOOMS OF LIFE

*Sit stern in the murk as they weave
An inscrutable glory or doom
For the robe of the land, and they heave
Their shuttles that murmur and grieve
As they shoot the black woof through the loom.*

*And where calls a voice to the bards
To smite with the falchion of Song,
The head of the hydra that guards,
Under golden and ponderous wards,
The god of the minions of Wrong?*

*From the harps oceanic that round
The sonorous and ultimate West,
Pour a rapture of music profound
From their surges of peace, to the ground
The Atlantic strains unto its breast,—*

*May the thunders be mustered to burst
Like the Horn of the Ram with its blast,
The gilt-pillared temple accurst
Where the Snake, in corruption immerst,
Rears high o'er his worshippers massed!*

LOOMS OF LIFE

*Over Time's steep horizons, O clouds!
Bare your phantoms of nations long dead;
Fling the dust of strong Rome and the shrouds
Of Tyre on the winds, and the crowds
Of tall ships bent on Carthage the red.*

*Lest swift on these domes by the verge
Of two seas where our citadels stand,
The red bolt should fall and the scourge,
And in room of a warning, a dirge
Be upborne from the lips of the land!*

* * *

*Still my service and birthright I choose
With the sons of the Westland,—for long
We stand devotees bound to the Muse,
Lest our realm of the Sunset should lose
Its Hesperian lustre in Song.*

*And to thee who divinest my dreams,
And sharest my thought, I indite
The remote and most fugitive gleams
Of these songs, for thou knowest the streams
Of my soul, and their source, and the light.*

LOOMS OF LIFE

MAN AND THE MOUNTAINS

The winds of worlds upon the brow of Man,
Valleys and gorges dark,—
Twilight, and purple banners in the van
Of Night's encroaching arc.

Whisper of weary seraphs, then a hush,—
Sighs and vast solitude;
Then the slant lances of the sun where crush
The mountain-masses rude.

Serene they sat erect and thronged with awe,
Prodigious with the sun.
The salient majesties of peaks, I saw
Held one mute marvel—one!

Their brows were red with questions of the Night;
Under the white moon's horn
Their iron queries stood till they grew bright
With answers of the morn.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Again Day's skies embraced them and they tore
 Its light and pierced its dome,
And with enormous shoulders they upbore
 The gods' celestial home.

And when the tribulation of the rain
 In mist the ranges furled,
Their mighty presences pulsed like a pain
 Whose roots seize on the world.

And oft the voice of the wind, wild orator!
 Clamored and rang on high,
And then the keen, significant stars no more
 Launched malice from the sky.

Never mad storm, nor frost, nor summer fire,
 Nor rash bolts blazing blue,
Moved them—the everlasting ones! to ire
 More than the mild, sweet dew.

They breathed, and lo! the avalanches sped
 To emerald vales profound,
Or, harried by the years, some boulder fled
 Down tracks of thunderous sound.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Man's race was but a murmur through the nights,
A stain Day bore to view;
No sacrilege of tongues upon those heights
Broke the long peace they knew.

Their caverned orbs saw cities on the plain—
A thousand domes and towers
Basked sunbright—and when sank their eyes again
Wild grass and windward flowers.

When eons waned and stars strove with their fate,
Stern Demiurgos came,
And throned upon their tallest crests he sate
And spake one potent name.

Peak leaned to solemn peak. The master stirred
Their granite lips to speech;
Each, in that sinister vast awe unheard,
Darkly communed with each.

What plots profound, what fathomless designs,
Throbbled through the palsied air?
What subtle secrecies oppressed the pines
Or the cold moon-disc bare?

LOOMS OF LIFE

Through their deep, runic syllables there ran
Tides of tremendous doom,
'And when their council closed, the realms of Man
Lay dust on Time's gray loom.

Eternity! thy mace's conquering blow
Shall break and fell these Kings,
Yet, till her face lie sunless, Earth shall know
These mighty, mystic Things—

Whisper of weary seraphs, then a hush,—
Sighs and vast solitude;
Then the slant lances of the sun where crush
The mountain-masses rude.

The wind of worlds upon the brow of Man,
Valleys and gorges dark,
Twilight, and purple banners in the van
Of Night's encroaching arc.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE CHANT OF MAN AND WOMAN

Earth's iron mingles with my blood,
But thine with milk is blent;
My tears are of the salt-sea flood,
But thine sweet springs unpent.
Thy pulse a fertile river glides,
But mine is urged by ocean-tides.
All human, human, human,
The fire of heart we fan.
Thou are the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

Like mountain-winds o'er towers,
So calls my voice and rings;
A fragrant breeze 'midst flowers
Is thine that sighs and sings.
A garden-sheltered plant thy form,
And mine a pine within the storm.
All human, human, human,
Through us a tremor ran.
Thou art the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The eagle sweeps along my glance,
Spanning all Earth and sky;
Thy tender doves of vision chance
No flight so deep, so high.
My thoughts are flames on mountain heights,
And thine are lakes of mystic lights.
All human, human, human,
The visions that we scan.
Thou art the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

Like eager lilies drink thine ears
Love's note and the infant's cry;
Mine drain the thunder of the spheres
And rapt as sea-shells lie
On shores of Life's resounding sea
And hear one voice—Humanity!
All human, human, human,
Curst by no primal ban.
Thou art the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

Thy cloven bosom's hill and vale,
Where Love hath set his tents,
Hold store of raptures ringed by pale
Of spirit and of sense.

LOOMS OF LIFE

My breast is fort and battle-field,
But not to thee—to thee a shield.
All human, human, human,
We walk in Nature's van.
Thou art the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

Thy brow bears halos from the moon,
Mine fire from out the sun,
Yet through Life's morning and her noon
And night they gleam as one.
Linked stars are we in Nature's train,—
Forever one—forever twain.
All human, human, human,
Fruit of the cosmic plan,
Thou art the Queen called Woman;
I am the King called Man.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE FIRE FUNERAL

(The Cremation of Shelley's Body near Leghorn in the year 1822.)

On the dolorous shore where remorseful surges
 cast him,
 Lies the poet, cold and white.
Low groan the billows as their foam goes blowing
 past him,
And his eyes no more are bright.

Blue eyes bright no more like the azure lustre
 o'er him,—
 Still their blue repays its blue;
Down his brow's wan splendor all his weeping
 curls deplore him
Like frail tendrils drooped with dew.

There he lies, Earth's precious sacrifice to grieving
 air and ocean,
 Kissed by wave and wind and sun,
While the invisible stars of day trail in their
 ghostly motion,
Mourning for a darkened one.

LOOMS OF LIFE

But stars shall not behold him more, nor Night
nor Day forever,
For the pyre looms on the shore,
And fond arms of brother-poets lift him now with
love that never
Such a sweet, sad burthen bore.

Flames feast upon those seraph lips eternal music
moulded;
Fiery halos orb his head,
While fire enfolds that body which a soul of fire
enfolded,—
West Wind, moan! thy child is dead.

Skyward rolls like censer-smoke a dark, majestic
column
Past the clouds that lift the morn,
And his sacred heart in balsam by his comrades
mute and solemn,
To a northern isle is borne.

Now the broken twilight smoulders and the crim-
son coals are dying,—
Winds and sands the ashes hearse,
And his dust soars free where worlds and suns,
on cosmic currents flying,
Sow it through the Universe.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SONG OF A HAPPY SPIRIT

I fold my shining wings
Close o'er my throbbing sides;
I lure the quivering lark that sings
Through Ether's thrilling tides.
O'er mottled clouds I climb
And lash the molten air,—
Sole Lord am I of Task and Time
Over human care.
What is human care?
Is it the voice of bells that chime
Beyond the hills? or cities' grime
Dark and deadly there?

From dawn till dusk I float
Where spear the solar rays;
On the squat, swelling moon I gloat
And whirr across her ways;
I thrid the tops of trees
And press the mountains bare,
But still the pulse within the breeze
Throbs with human care.
What is human care?

LOOMS OF LIFE

The snoring winds bear o'er the seas
Its burthen in their litanies,
Rolling to their lair.

I dart, I flash, I wheel
From flower unto flower;
I hunt the dragon-fly and steal
Through sparry mine and bower;
Along the foam I skip
Where blanching billows flare,
And flaunt the flags of many a ship
Fraught with human care.
What is human care?
Lives it on every mortal lip?
Is it a plague, a sword, a whip?
Or flame or smoke or snare?

Oh! swift I dance and glide
Over lake—over wold!
On rusted weather-vanes I ride
And crosses warm with gold.
Of Love and Joy I sing
Or shape a happy prayer,—
But are those evil winds that bring
Mortals human care?

LOOMS OF LIFE

What is human care?
For there is no imagining
Could shape for me the thought or thing
Whether foul or fair.

In silences that brood
Where sun-stained eagles fly
Above the storms, my brotherhood
Are happy! they and I
Know not what lies below
Our blue dominions fair,—
Below the shadows naught we know,—
Naught of human care.
What is human care?
Some punishment men undergo?
Some payment of a debt they owe,
Which we cannot share?

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SYMBOL IN THE CAVE

In a crystal cave I stood,—
Drop by drop the water ran
O'er its roof as runs the blood
Through the coral veins of man.
Drop by drop the water fell
To the ground as tears may fall
When the springs of sorrow well
From some blind source mystical.
Slowly from the crusted floor
Rose the eager virgin cone,
As its bright mate, hanging o'er,
Loosed the silver from its stone.
Male and female so they strove
Downward, upward through the dark,
Peak to point, below, above,
Urged by passion's goad and spark.
Some stood sundered, some had met,
Some were melting into one,
Some built patient pillars set
In splendor hidden to the sun.
So they sank and so aspired,
Though dead ages lay between,
So Love and Yearning fired

LOOMS OF LIFE

The unseeing and unseen.
And my torch flung maddened light
Through the spar-hung cavern dim,
Till it seemed the grot grew bright
With presences of seraphim.

In my heart's red chambers surged
Sudden magic wild and strong,
As when parted lips are merged
Like two words within a song.
From my bosom rose a sigh;
All its fervent vapor pearled,
And from my lips a mighty cry
Rang upward to the world:

O Love, where art thou? where
In mystery-mazèd night?
Unveil thy face,—declare
Thee to my aching sight!
Oh, grows thy heart to mine
Through void and voiceless years?
Oh, fares my heart to thine,
And lures it on with tears?
Let clouds and palls be drawn,
And the lodestone meet the steel;

LOOMS OF LIFE

Let deliverance and the dawn
Soul unto soul reveal.
So with stormy flame august,
Love my startled spirit stirred,
All the cavern, all my dust
Trembled—trembled—trembled
When the vatic force assembled,
Risen round that potent word.

THE STALACTITE:

Adoring, I seek thee alone!
The ocean-wide reaches of years
I bridge with the trend of my stone
And fathom this darkness with tears.
O crystalline virgin, I bend
Above thee, I hunger and shine.
Ascend! O pale mistress, ascend
To the breast that is striving for thine!

THE STALAGMITE:

Through cold underearthern, through night
Thy tears have aroused me to glow
With an ecstasy fixed by thy sight—
O Lord of my Life!—see, I grow

LOOMS OF LIFE

'Neath caresses and soaring desire
From beds of the nethermost gloom,
And thy tears falling on me are fire
That shapes, though its passion consume.

THE STALACTITE :

They drift, pass and die as we yearn—
Gray eons and darkness and cold ;
Our crests still live severed and burn
With the pent, sundered kisses they hold.
Time dies, but our hope hath no death ;
The dews that I garner are rains
Of rapture I cast with a breath
On thy head ;—they are blood of my veins.

THE STALAGMITE :

I climb with my listening spire ;
To thy glistening spire I climb.—
'Tis a star that still draweth me higher
And nigher through distance and Time.
What impulse exalts me and leads,
O King, to thy throne on the height?

LOOMS OF LIFE

To the heart that burns o'er me and bleeds
Like a torch o'er a gulf in the night?

THE STALACTITE:

Lo! the pillars about us that stand
Upholding the plains of the Earth—
Obedient they joined at command
Of the love that has given us birth.
So I sink, so thou risest to me
Ere the ultimate clasp we attain
And grow one in Love's crystalline tree
From longing, from tears and from pain.

From the ether, from the room
Splendored by the raving sun,
To Earth's fire-fertile womb,
Great Love, thy will be done.
Thy will be done, O Law
Whose adamant and steel
Mysteriously draw
Hearts, worlds and stones to feel.
Go draw my heart afar
To a heart beyond my sight,
So a star may reach a star—
Disclose! Exalt! Unite!

LOOMS OF LIFE

ATLANTIS

Westward the pillars slender
Of Hercules it lay—
The land whose pride and splendor
Once burned beneath the day.
No more the sun shall warm it;
No more man's footfall be
In Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

Above her fanes of glory
The iron vessel steamed,—
The city shrined in story
Such as no poet dreamed.
I knew the marble towers,
The cold, white majesty
Of Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

An hundred fathoms to mine eyes,
Through molten blue and green,
The sun that towered in the skies
Drew up the deeps serene.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Snow-like the roofs and temples,
The streets with pearls strewn free
In Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

Silence in dead Atlantis bode;
Quenched lay her pride and wealth;
The scarlet sea-flags streamed and flowed;
The serpents slipped in stealth.
Pale blooms and shells bedecked her floor,
And the starred anemone
In Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

An hundred fathoms to my ken
Rose white with closed eyes
A face—so to the sight of men
The lost, loved women rise.
It smiled and shone and brightened
With strange, wild witchery
From Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

Deep down my heart lay hidden
Where coral-forests bloomed;

LOOMS OF LIFE

Deep down my arms were bidden
To clasp the city doomed.
There, twice a thousand years ago,
O Love, I dwelt with thee
In Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

Beneath the sunbeams and the ships,
One hundred fathoms deep,
Upon thy sea-cold eyes and lips
Roll tides of endless sleep.
Would that we twain were lying,
With thy hair flung over me,
In Atlantis, old Atlantis,
Atlantis in the sea.

SAN FRANCISCO DESOLATE

Ruin outraced the dawn.
When the ports of night were drawn,
The feast of death lay spread;
The city bowed low her head,
Disconsolate in the morn,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Sitting amidst her dead—
Forlorn! O forlorn!

Lo! how the touch of day
Rolleth in pity away
Over the graves and the fires
And the houses, domes and spires
Abject and broken in dust.
Woe on thine ashes and pyres,
Young Queen, once august!

Flame had goaded the ground,
And the valves of the deeps profound
Broke through their riven rock;
She felt the wrath of the shock
And a storm upheaved her floor;—
Dawn saw the grace that crowned
My city no more.

Woe hath befallen thee,
And thou wringest in misery
Thy bleeding, despairing hands
Over thine agonis'd lands,
For a great grief came to pass;
Thy beauty is prey to the brands,
My city, alas!

LOOMS OF LIFE

Thou weepest, mother mine,
For the dear dead that are thine,
And the dark tide of thy tears
Is one not of days but years.

The ashes lie gray on thy head,
And deep is thy wound, and thy biers
Lie dense with the dead.

Splendor of thine and pride
Are departed; the waves deride
Thee and thy sisters sore,
And lisp and laugh on the shore,
And the sun is brave with gold,
But the sun and the sea no more
Know thee—as of old.

* * * * *

Remount, O Queen! resume
The throne of thy hills; through the doom
And the dolor and terror that reign
O'er thy walls, thou shalt lift again
Thy head. The sons shall restore
Anew, from the wastes of thy pain,
Thy glory once more.

LOOMS OF LIFE

O EVANESCENCE!

(San Francisco)

I loved a work of dreams that bloomed from Art;
 A town and her turrets rose
 As from the red heart
Of the couchant sun where the west wind blows
 And worlds lie apart.
Calm slept the sea-flats; beneath the blue dome
 Copper and gold and alabaster gleamed,
 And sea-birds came home.

 But I woke in a sorrowful day;
 The vision was scattered away.
Ashes and dust lay deep on the dream that I
 dreamed.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE RUINED TEMPLE

(Grace Church, San Francisco)

A Temple in a Sunset Land I saw,
Rent by the throes of Earth, the storms of fire,
And o'er it brooded wide with spells of awe
The doom that fell on Sidon and on Tyre.

And many an arch and ruinous portal there
Stood stored with memories of a perished time;
The stark stones yielded echoes of a prayer;
The towers quivered with a ghostly chime.

Faint from the shattered font an infant's cry
Came forth, and soft the crumbling pillars shed
The strains of nuptial music blithe and high;—
The paves rolled dolorous requiems o'er the
dead.

But when the moon smote with her wands of
white
The solemn wreck whence all these voices
poured,
I heard Time's pinions beat across the night
And saw the gleam of Death's annulling
sword.

LOOMS OF LIFE

TO THE EARTH-DÆMON

(An Orison sung in the Season of the
Earthquake)

Chorus of All Living Things:

Dæmon of Earth underfoot!
Source, yet solace of Ills!
Who sleepest supine at the root
Of the plains and the hills,

Ages lie spanned by thy breath;
Thy pulse marks an eon's flow;
Thy sigh brings us harvest of death
When it heaves to and fro.

The Voices of Men Alone:

Stir never in slumber more;
Seal fast the gates of thy caves;
Fields, cities and seas roof thee o'er—
Our homes and our graves.

LOOMS OF LIFE

May never the core of mid-fires
Stir thee, lift thee to wrath,
Where the toil of man aspires
And Earth glory hath.

Fair is the planet, though storms
Tear and torment the air,
And Horror in myriad forms
Rolls now here and now there.

Death conquers where storm-billows leap;
Death where the hurricanes blow;
Death where flames tower and sweep—
Is Earth, too, our foe?

O peace! O leave us the ground;
Rest in thy chambers deep.
In thy granite vaults profound
Sleep thou—so we sleep.

Our race and its fruits of toil
In the end thy gulf must fill;
Grant us peace of the soil;
Grant us peace and be still.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Rage not like the hungering sea,
Thou who art heir to all.
What is ours shall revert to thee
When Time bids it fall.

Chorus of All Living Things:

Dæmon of Earth underfoot,
Source, yet solace of Ills
Who sleepest supine at the root
Of the plains and the hills,

Ages lie spanned by thy breath;
Thy pulse marks an eon's flow;
Thy sigh brings us harvest of death
When it heaves to and fro.

THE RHAPSODIST

The slow-unfurling flags
Of Night droop in the air;
The Day's supernal master drags
Headlong to his lair

LOOMS OF LIFE

His veils of mellow fire,
His shrouds of rosy mist
That with a burning, yet a vain desire
His rolling flight resist.

Gone is the golden glamour,
Gone is the vesper throng,
Gone is the blithesome and melodious clamor
Of birds in even-song.

When the day was hard and white,
When it sinks to slumber and to night,
When the Earth lies strangely sad,—
I rejoice, I rejoice,—I am glad!

A lonely sister-planet
Burneth placidly;
Only the sun can ban it,
Or bury it for me,
Or wrest its smile from me
Who stand each night upon this hill,
Mutely still,
And watch its silver rising o'er the sea.

LOOMS OF LIFE

When all is dark (remember
There is none but the star and I),
On bended knee,
With a litany,
I adore that crystal ember;—
Yea, I worship it utterly!

O world of light and loveliness,
What thing more beautiful could bless
A fragment of mortality like me?
Then, as now, I bathe my brow
And drench it with its beams,
And my brain blooms like a garden, I vow,
And all its flowers are dreams.
But not with orisons alone
Devotion to the star I own,
For with song shall I defend it,—
My pen with song
Shall be bold and strong
As an archangelic lance!
Ah, could you but know the glance
Of that star you would live but to tend it
With tears, you would live but to lend it
Your pale, rapt countenance.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Still at night-noon you would wait
On a high hill elate
And watch its silver rising o'er the sea.
On bended knee
With a litany,
You would worship it with rapture utterly.
Though you crawl to it half dead
For the want of little bread,
You may feast off fairer food
Than the gluttoned and the wolfish multitude
That below your marble mountain,
Deep beneath your dream,
Struggle like a maddened stream
From some black and boiling fountain
Where fiery fevers gleam.
Shadows here! shadows there!
Moiling in the sulphur-steam,
Toiling in the pale and poisoned air
Forever, forever.
But you, ah! you shall never
Lose your starry joys whose stealth
Builds the soul's eternal wealth,
Not hard and haunted gold.
Though men deny you fire
When the year is white and old,
You shall warm your heart with a lyre

LOOMS OF LIFE

Fallen from the holier, higher
Flames upon an astral pyre,
And be no more a-cold.

So every night
On my lone, lone height,
In rapture
I capture
The frailest and fairest of things
That the light of my soft star brings,
For they flutter above me with shimmer
Of their tinted, moth-like wings;
They are dreams that grow dimmer and dimmer
As the morn-mist brighter grows;
They die, O, they die! when the glimmer
Of morn is rich with the rose.

O long, long, long,
May I kneel to my gentle star,
And I would I might raise a song
That might fly to its flame divine—
A song in a voice that is sweeter far
Than the voice that despairs in mine.
All through the tense night-hours

LOOMS OF LIFE

My soul lifts like the ocean
Lifts to the falling showers
Of the moon's omnipotence,
And its every mood and emotion
To that vasty eloquence,
Bends like a child in a loving, mild,
Devoted obedience.

My passionate, constant adoring
Hath burthen of prayer and of plea;
It is filled with an endless imploring
That the beam which ineffably
Blesses my lifted face,
May burn each night on the soaring height
Of this ancient, desolate place,
Though it burn no more for me,—
Even here on this rock-rent hill
Where, ever alone and still,
On bended knee,
With a litany,
I watched its silver rising from the old, imperious
sea.

LOOMS OF LIFE

KEATS AT WINTER SUNDOWN

(Hampstead Heath, London)

I know, worn fire, that thou wilt rise again
Tomorrow and on morrows dark to me—
But here, here in my heart, there burns that pain
Of farewell deep as trouble of the sea.

It is a grief unparted from the heart
As is Life's ruby fountain in its grot;—
O keen, inseparable pain, where art
Thou not? Where Love and Happiness are not.

No less I feel it when I view the rose,
For in a day shall fall its loveliness;
Alas! I know, I see it in the close
Of this old, gray and dying year no less.

Deep in the eyes of Beauty it reminds;
It warns from every song as it is sung—
Yet Earth again shall know these in their kinds,
But nevermore that bard who died too young.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE TOWER GARDEN

(London)

Grim granite and harsh flint the bastions rose;
The battlements frowned gray; the moat was
deep;
Around me rang the city in its throes,—
They were not like my heart's—which never
sleep.

Here once we sat when Spring compelled the air;
The birds wove song and motion through the
skies;
Dreams sat within her eyes and she was fair;
Her face was strange with silence like her
eyes.

We saw the children play, but now no more
I see them through the eyes of greater love.
The winds' vast globes roll haunted and their
core
Is molten with her voice, and memories rove.

LOOMS OF LIFE

This is the self-same spot; the ancient Tower,
Eternally unchanged beholds me come.
But O! it is no more the self-same hour,—
Old Earth has clasped her and her lips are
dumb.

LONDON IN SNOW

White, white they lie, smoke-smitten roofs and
streets,—
Their yearlong black distemper blanched
away;
Their faces and their spaces gray in sheets
Of splendor wonder-wrought are born to Day.

Air-flocking armies seize the shackled town;
Their tents are bright on house-tops and in
fields;
Their lances hang in rows, their banners drown
The blinded lawns that gleam like argent
shields.

Clad on with ermine, lo! the muffled limbs
Of trees grow shadows mated unto night;

LOOMS OF LIFE

The roving eye is lured along the rims
Of walls that stretch victorious lines of white.

The deadened fall of foot and hoof unheard
Breaks not the fettered air; the wheels are
dumb

On smothered ways; the sullen stream unstirred
Engulfs the swift, bright legions as they come.

Old dome and tower, pinnacle and spire
Are charmed to crusted marble 'gainst the
clouds

In which, enmeshed, the struggling round of fire
Peers dim and red across the city's shrouds.

There let her lie in beauty 'neath the hems
Of mantles pure, miraculous and cold.
And leaden skies. Soon toiling Town and
Thames
Shall hold their ancient grayness as of old.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SEA AND THE CITY

When the dust of toil lies scattered
And robes the setting sun;
When the town's dull day is shattered
And the world's great night begun;
When Even ascends her station,
And Peace the throne of my heart;
When the streets grow a desolation
And Silence broods in the mart—

When over the wastes oceanic
The nightly lanterns rise,
And the clouds are diaphanic
Like love in a young maid's eyes,—
Then pearls that in buoyant millions
O'er sighing salt-floods gleam,
And stars in their blue pavilions
My radiant sisters seem.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE THRONE OF THE STORM

Assembled in the firmamental plain,
The marshalled clouds loom ominous and dire,
Charged with fell thunder and the missile rain
And pregnant with their burthen of rash fire.

The rebel winds and armament of mists
Threaten the city's peaks of carven stone;
The lances of the lightnings in their lists
Are couched for battle by the evening's throne.

Arrayed above the sunset red they stand—
The crests of clouds in day's retreating light,
While slow the enormous dusks on either hand
Roll up the devouring barriers of the night.

But soon shall fall the bolt to strew them wide
In foray fierce across the colored waste
Where monsters now and giant dragons dyed
Rich in the edging sun, rear golden-faced.

O wait! ye lurking imminences vast,
And powers abortive in your cloudy domes;
Then dart your blades from ambush, fling your
blast
Upon your prey—this world of hearts and
homes!

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE LEPER OF LONDON

*In Euston Road in London Town,
I saw and felt and wrote this down.*

Her cheek was pale, her form was gaunt;
She seemed so strangely thin,
Thin as the shrouded ghosts that haunt
Scenes of their earthly sin.

She clutched my arm; with mordant words
Assailed my quailing ear—
Her face was like a starved bird's; —
Such speech do devils hear.

Her hands were clinging claws that burned
Through skin and flesh and bone,
While Sorrow seared those eyes she turned
Like dead stars on my own.

That voice rose whirling to my brain
And sought to shatter it;
I know to demons its refrain
Is torment in the pit.

LOOMS OF LIFE

She seemed of equal age with me,
Yet blithe and fresh was I,
And she was like some blasted tree
The bolts had doomed to die.

She stood enwrapped with charnel air
And pestilence's breath;
Harmattan winds had whipped her bare
And given her to Death.

It seemed his voice of doom and blight
Rang round her like a dirge,
And from her face, like spectral light,
Gleamed forth the Great White Scourge.

I looked upon a world of woes
And peered through Horror's land,
Then in mine eyes the waters rose,
And gold fell from my hand.

I shook and drew my arm away
And through the night I fled
From deeper night that knew no day
Save of the living dead.

LOOMS OF LIFE

I felt the curse of human things,—
Man, Law, the strife of Earth;
I felt the thrice-curst fate that brings
Woe to the babe at birth.

And those remorseless rods that fall
From palaces and domes
On worms that perish as they crawl
Athwart a nation's homes.

One blessing mounted from the thought
And o'er my spirit fell;
That figure dread had dashed to naught
The realms of After-hell.

MANHATTAN

Atlantes of the firmament! abrupt
The granite monsters of Manhattan frown,—
Phalanx of Titans, stark and interrupt,
Their tyrannous grim bulks oppress the town.

Their gonfalons and vaporous plumes at play
Stream rhythmic to the city's stormy beat,
Her giant pulse that goads the groaning day
To pile its mortal labor at their feet.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The stunned sea clasps the aching iron isle
That holds eternal tumult in its heart,
While Greed's great laugh from pile to towering
pile,
Leaps in relentless triumph o'er the mart.

Incessant roars her fevered race of lives
Crushed through the sunless channels of her
stone,
Or flung across the paths where Mammon drives
His chariot wheels o'er ways of flesh and bone.

What brand upon the brow of man? what mark
That hounds worn spirits toward a glittering
goal?

Where Luxury lifts her ashen husks, and dark
Earth idols force their usury from the soul.

O thunder-wrought Manhattan! shaped of gold
Thy tongue, thine eyes of blind basalt, of steel
Thy smothered breasts still young—yet bleak and
old

The mountainous gray weariness they feel.

Thy life is eaten by thine eagerness,
And round thy doomward sandals whirlwinds
roar,

LOOMS OF LIFE

And round thy wreck-mad walls the tempest's
stress
Riots from adamantine shore to shore.

Now Anarchs of Annihilation take
Their sleep of golden torpor in the glow
Of thy sky-storming summits—when they wake
What ruin red shall their war-trumpets blow?

“AN AMIABLE CHILD”

(On its Grave near Grant's Tomb, New York)

Dust of a bud of Spring,
Dust of a long-dead child,
How deep in saintly slumber!
Though myriad footsteps ring
On paves by crime defiled,
Where woes of men encumber
These grasses wet and wild.

Calm be thy sleep beside
The river visions fair,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Unstirred by that dark river
Of Life whose downward tide
Bears wreckage of Despair,
Where lips, like wounds that quiver,
Move bloody with a prayer.

Oft silent pass the hosts
By fever-phantoms led,
Where glooms the murky city,—
Silent to thee as ghosts
That mourn young flowers fled;
Their steps weave spells of pity
And memory o'er thy head.

High o'er the morselled stone
The hero's pyramid
In haggard granite towers
Enormous, bleak and lone,
But where thy curls lie hid,
Fall sun and rain and showers
Warm from the full eyelid.

Thy grave seems like a song
Of peace in iron frays,

LOOMS OF LIFE

A voice o'er wastes of madness,
Greed, misery and wrong,
A voice that might upraise
Thy bright and infant gladness
To bless our loveless days.

O storm-shod centuries!
Here grow your sick souls well,
Where this dead child is lying
'Neath olden stones and trees,
Where one sweet word shall tell
Of a tenderness undying
And the heart where it did dwell.

BEAUTY TROVE

Beauty, where dwellest thou?
Adores the unchanging sea
Thy foam-white foot at dawn
O'er some untrodden lawn
Glimmers thy starry brow
Where hast thou hidden thee?

In the still forest naves
Do birds and beasts behold

LOOMS OF LIFE

Thy face in shrines of green?
Thy light, perchance, is seen
In spar-hung crystal caves
Lavish with shattered gold?

Mayhap on peaks august,
'Mid the pure hermit-snows,
Thy dance is rosy bright?
Build us a morn from night
In this dim world of dust
Where the cold death-wind blows.

We seek thee where we build
Our house of happiness,
And yet we find thee not.
Where lies the sacred spot
That with thy smile is filled?
Where Life may bloom and bless?

For we are blind to Life,
And Change is like a veil,
Let thy presaging eyes
Shine from these dunnest skies,
Calming the iron strife
Wherein our spirits fail.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Thou hauntest star and sun,
The moon, the mortal mind;
Thou art in eye and cheek,
Spirit still hears thee speak
From shadows, from the dun
Cloud and the solemn wind.

Thou bidest still with us,
Though mists our vision fill,
Though oft thy robes be changed,
Thy face is not estranged;
Thy rose miraculous
Blooms by our pathway still.

Raise us a fairer song,—
Fairer than all the Past!
Yield us thy draught divine,
Blood shall grow rapt as wine,
And faint eyes, waxing strong,
See the new realms thou hast!

LOOMS OF LIFE

ASSAULT OF SILVER

Eve's skies glowed red and resolute,
The morn's were meek and gray;
Down sank a myriad angels mute
And dense their legions lay.

The muffled mutiny of life
Strove with the white-winged host;
Dull rang the broken steps of strife;
The city grew a ghost.

A ghost, a spirit robed in white,
Whose stains were wiped away;
Pure to the slaty face of night
Like a fair bride she lay.

But on the highways of the town
The drifts were trodden stark
Where vanquished flakes sank shuddering down
To ruin deep and dark.

The streets grew grim with mire, but still
The roofs were blest with white,
And gardens and the guarded hill
Lay radiant to the sight.

LOOMS OF LIFE

To the Presence of
WASHINGTON IRVING

In Lindaraxa's Garden by the fountain,
I see thee, gentle phantom, woo the light,—
Thou smilest!—as fare forth the magic mountain
Old dreams of Moorish glories reft from night.

Thine eyes beheld their pageant's necromancy;
Thee living 'mid these ruins now I see.
Thou didst reinhabit them with thy fancy;
My fancy now reinhabits them with thee.
The Alhambra, Granada, Spain.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE LOOMS OF LIFE

To Dr. Ernst Haeckel of Jena.

In a garden, in its shade,
Sheltered from the matin-glow,
Once I dreamed beside a maid
And longed new worlds to know.

For I envied winds that blew,—
I, who happy lived of men,
Envied all the birds that flew
And was unhappy then.

When the sun shone strong and fair,
Rash I left the garden-close;
Left the maiden weeping there—
A rose beside the rose.

Wildwoods were aburst with song,
Purple fell their shadows all,
Chanting rivers danced along,
And roared the waterfall.

LOOMS OF LIFE

From the molten, rolling sphere,
Pleasant fell the sifted heat
O'er my heart whose red career
Seemed tambour to my feet.

In a forest darkly cool
For a draught I bent me down
O'er a sky-blue painted pool;—
My dangling locks shone brown.

Soon the noon clomb to his heights
And sate sovereign o'er his sun,
Where the condors and the kites
Enormous spirals spun.

Black like demons o'er the world
Rushed their shadows. Low was hewn
Straight the peak of Day and hurled
Down slopes of Afternoon.

Fallen fervor left the air;
Eld oppressed the stricken light;
She wove wearinesses where
The East announced the Night.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Slow the blue and arching calms
Loosed their splendor fire-orbed;
Winds grew sighs and slumb'rous psalms
The brooding Earth absorbed.

Thus was Night—adown the skies
An incessant rumor sped;
It lay upon my heart as lies
A stone upon the dead.

Fell a lethargy meseemed
Over me—the ponderous curse
Passed, and this the dream I dreamed,
Lost in the Universe.

Breaking, cleaving earthly bounds
Hedged by undivulging sleep,
Past the stellar lights and sounds
I plumbed an endless deep.

Nature there with stilly eyes
Reft of light or living spark,
Loomed upon a central rise,
'A flame-defended arc.

LOOMS OF LIFE

There erect in awful state,
Wrapt in cosmic gloom sublime,
Towered calm, inviolate,
The daughter of old Time.

Substance stood beside her throne,
Robed with wonders strangely wrought,—
Force and Substance they alone
Her ministers—and Thought.

They were giants beautiful—
Three, with pinions bright and wide,
All silent in the sacred lull
Where mysteries abide.

Substance soared a seraph grand,
Shaped of pearl and opal-stone,
With a globe in either hand
At basis of the throne.

Force was wrought of warmer flame;
In his hands the levins danced;
Rapture trembled through his frame
And from his plumes it glanced.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Thought of all stood loveliest;
Fulgent on his brow the beams
Shook with lustre manifest
To mortals but in dreams.

Son was he of Energy,
Fashioned of his finer fires,
Tall he flamed as o'er the sea
Some crater's torch aspires.

Then with orbs that held no more,
Vapid in the sterile light,
I saw the three great spectres bore
Stark eyes devoid of sight.

Eyes of iron or of stone,
Blank as waste infinity,
While Nature, sightless on her throne,
Ruled o'er the sightless three.

Eyes like deserts gray and dead,
Or the plains of stagnant seas,
Or the parched moon overhead—
Their eyes seemed like to these.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Mute their frozen lips as cliffs
Where the unseen eagle clings,
Yet darkly great with hieroglyphs
And weird with whisperings.

As a fountain's water drips
Tinkling on the chilly stones,
Substance with his lucid lips
Spoke forth in crystal tones:

"What thou hast I gave to thee;
Of my being's bulk thou art,
Yet shalt thou return to me
And render part for part."

Like the roaring of a flame,
Like the breathing of the Flood,
Then a rolling voice there came
Tumultuous o'er my blood.

"Into thee my breath did pass!
Energy hath made to burn
That which stirs thy living mass
Yet shall to me return."

LOOMS OF LIFE

Like some echo frail and far,
Fell the silver voice of Thought,
Faint as trembles from a star
A ray from gulfs of Nought.

"I alone have raised thy state
O'er the flower, bird or gem,—
Kingly clay, yet co-create
With Earth that houses them."

Then Nature's trebled voice I heard,
Stirring all my smitten soul
As a smitten reed is stirred
By winds from off the Pole:

"So they blindly wove and weave
Worlds as they have woven thee:
Let energy to Substance cleave
And Thought crown Man for me.

All I hold who silent lie,
Blind at Life's illusive root;
In me all gods and ages die,
All suns grow cold and mute.

LOOMS OF LIFE

"I in Process and in Plan
Am the sowing, am the seed,
Am the harvest, and to Man
The iron Laws of Need."

Through that spell-tormented gloom,
Fast with Terror's icy stress,
Denser darkness fell like doom;
The voice grew less and less.

There within their deeps alurk,
Whelmed in Chaos, wombed in Night,
Laboring at their telic work,
The Powers sank from sight.

Then the awful dusks were drawn
On the fateful potencies
Blind and dead, where never dawn
Smites on their mysteries.

All my shattered senses swam
And in vapor passed away
Ere the solar oriflamb
Shone in my Earthly day.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Shone again, although the year
 Stood where sighing Autumn grieves
And the Earth was burning sere
 With storms of perished leaves.

Now I felt no more the flame
 In my heart, nor roving rage,
And I seemed as one that came
 From some long pilgrimage.

Slow I sought the garden-close
 For a maiden mourning there;
Savage winds had wrecked the rose
 And cast it on the air.

But no maiden more I found
 Though her blessed name I cried
Through the garden's sainted ground
 And all the world beside.

As a silent pool I passed
 Toward the dying of the day,
To mine eyes its silver glassed
 My locks of ashen gray.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Then a vision and a light
Rose athwart the years I whiled
In the deeps. From out the night
Came the crying of a child.

With my yearning hands agrope,
Long I erred within the wood,
Calling on the child to hope;—
Methought it understood.

Was it echo of my voice
That within the forest rang?
Still it bade the babe rejoice
And once, I knew it sang.

Soon a tiny hand I grasped
Which my eager fingers spanned,
While my other hand was clasped
Warm by a woman's hand.

Then I knew it was the maid
As her woman's heart was prest
Close to mine. We long had strayed
Each on the other's quest!

LOOMS OF LIFE

'Neath the moon we trembled there;
Now the infant lips were still,
And through Earth and Flesh and Air
We felt great Nature's will.

HYMN TO THE PASSING EARTH

When the cliff crumbles and the splintered peak
Feels the sharp fracture of the frost and snow;
When the fell deluge and the rivers seek
To drag green continents where oceans flow;
When moons are darkened and the suns lose
lustre,
And the worn axles of old Earth turn slow,
While stars in terror round her orbit cluster
To peer upon her fall and overthrow,
And all Creation in an endless flowing,
Is tidal toward her still and secret springs,
Oblivious to his coming and his going,
Must Man be numbered with her mortal things?

Bleak Time shall part the worlds on roads of
thunder,
Loosen and level and annul all bands,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Strike love-linkt hearts with sudden glaive
asunder

And break the clasp of fond and fettered hands,
Still bid the glacier's monstrous travail bear

Her icebergs to their oceanic sire,
And from the crater's throat convulsive flare
Doom's sable flag of ashes fringed with fire.

O ancient anguish of the dry sea-hollow!

And weight of patience of the withered plains,
And valleys thwarted of their joy—when follow

The winsome blooms and emerald gift of rains?
When shall the tumult of Earth's tides and
changes

Lift the sea's Kraken to the sun-bleached crags?
When the massed, shelved and adamantine ranges
Dethroned, nurse coral and the salt-ooze flags?

Though all fair territories of the globe be riven,
And weedy continents slow-heaving rise
From cloven foam, and dark, strange seas be
driven

To shape new shores 'neath re-assembled skies,
Though Time shall strike a silence through the
ringing

LOOMS OF LIFE

Sweet sisterhood of strings in human harps,
The hands that smote them and the lips whose
singing

Was rapture! blend with dust of Alpine scarps,
Not these are measure for Man's deeds—nor yet

The lives of suns in the mutable Immense,
Nor prone despair of unplumbed distance set
Past baffled brains and closen shores of sense.

Though Ozymandias and Rameses win

No whisper of their fames where darkly hid,
The desert devours the Sphinx and locks within

Its breast lost Luxor and the Pyramid,
Though bronze betray its trust, and scripted
glory

Of great bards vanish like the sceptred kings,
Must Man, on Nature's temple threshold hoary,
Groan at the far futility of things?

O great gray question! still the deeps lie shrouded
With midnights round the word for which we
yearn.

What though across the Future's peaks unclouded
Ne'er sign nor answering symbol soar and
burn—

LOOMS OF LIFE

In light and not in shadow fall our race!
Nor shall the monster staves of Cosmos blight
Man in his mundane majesty of place
Nor halt his march against the evening height.

THE MASTER OF MAGNIFICENCE

Embattled like a phalanx tall,
The sharp Sierran summits gleamed;
Their frozen pyramids stood all
Enchanted and their forests dreamed.

Above their argent slopes the sun
Hung like a golden shield on high;
His joyous love fell fast upon
Their crests and showered from the sky.

He saw where aureate valleys sweep
Their leagues of wheaten billows forth,
And marked two master rivers creep
To Ocean, flowing South and North.

Then broke his level flight of spears
Through passive airs a pathway free

LOOMS OF LIFE

To where the toil of myriad years
Had reared the deathless mammoth tree.

The Earth lay pregnant rich with ore,
And felt her sunless treasures play
Like wonder in her veins, and bore
Her metals glittering to the day.

Raised not the sinuous vine her round
And purple gems to charm his eye?—
She who drank rapture from the ground
And amorous fever from the sky.

The fields in adoration bent;
The orange burned to match his fire,
While hills aglow with flowers sent
Their pæans to their lord and sire.

So throned upon the stainless air,
He cast his gold with royal hand
Where realm on realm spread wide and fair—
The peerless Californian Land!

LOOMS OF LIFE

SONG OF THE SUNDOWN

Across the prone Pacific vast,
Struck into emerald laced with white,
With gold enchased, and overcast
With red, the homeless sun took flight.

Loth from the vantage of his gaze
The fast harmonic law compelled
His westward plunge to build the days
Round Orient ranges citadelled.

Magnificent his min'stry trode,—
The appavelled clouds bore mountain crests,
And to their lord, as down he rode,
Offered their broad, emblazoned breasts.

Yet golden, golden ran a lane
From sun to city o'er the sea;
The trend of tides that swept the plain
Flickered, then crossed it brokenly.

Then reached the blue horizon up
And seized the rondure of the rim

LOOMS OF LIFE

Of the great globe; the ocean's cup
Trembled with glory to the brim.

The fervor of his passion's thirst
Sank slaked within the emerald wine,
While reddening vapors curled and burst
Like fumes of myrrh above a shrine.

So the strong sea bore down the sun,
Nor any more his splendor fell
Upon the city's hills, though one
Rose ghostly with a dim farewell.

Yet for a space two fiery lips
Lay smouldering on the darkening green;
A farewell trembled to the ships,
And Day was lulled in dusk serene.

Slowly aloft the landward skies
Now mounts the rolling, argent sphere;
The pointed stars unseal their eyes
Each sharpened with a gleaming tear.

Then one by one the lamps awake
Where loom the city's barriers dun;
Her streets begin to bloom and break
With points of lustre, one by one.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The waves lap on, the breezes stray;
Her stony pomp is robed in light;
She that flamed golden to the Day,
Now glitters silvern to the Night.

VALE, CALIFORNIA

Roaring to Southward rolled the train. The
night

Down firmamental fields to Westward bore
Her arc of soft eclipse, the hills and shore
Enfolding, save where sunset stormed with light
The spines of gilded peaks whose Heavenward
height

The aspect of an earthly parting wore.
Rose then, revolving Day, whose splendor more
Made splendid palm and orange in my flight.

Though Alps their *massifs* interpose, or sands
Of wind-worn, dappled deserts sunder me
From thee, O mother, or the floods' great awe;
Not siren cities nor enchanted lands,
Nor old isles 'stablished in their subject sea,
From thee my loyalty and love shall draw!

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SHADOW O'ER THE CITY

(San Francisco)

Vast hung the moon o'er ruins black and prone,
And where the torn, flame-stricken summits
 blight

The heavens, there crouched all vigilant in light,
Two marble lions by a palace lone

Whose portals hungry weeds had overgrown,
Whose mangled walls gave ingress to the Night
And all her stars. There Silence sat upright,
Ash-crowned, and wrought a menace round her
 throne.

Low in the vales each litten thoroughfare
Trembled, as Life, with roses tossing red,
Danced in her glittering garments through
 the town;

But high across the still, moon-fettered air,
Full on the living streets I saw the dead
Look darkly and inexorably down.

LOOMS OF LIFE

LONDON

Dismay drags down the condor-plumes of Thought
And holds in pause the strive of Fancy's prow
Where Time's behemoth towers. Answer, thou
Gray monster of the modern Chaos wrought
Along the amazed meads, one flower-fraught,
What voices lure the ravens round thy brow?
What leagues must feed thy sateless hunger
now,
Ere to the assailant seas thy bourn be brought?

The island sinks beneath thee, sinks though hewn
From granite of sea-ramparts, and the land
Thy mordant shadows gnaw, fades like the moon
By huge, eclipsing blackness struck and banned
In sight of men who tremble at high noon,
Fearing some terror of the night at hand.

LOOMS OF LIFE

TO MIMIC POETS

Why should the poet dwell in vanished days,
Deaf to his own and blind to all their light?
Why piece old shattered gods or from their
night
The ghosts of weary nymphs and satyrs raise
To dance to measures false in alien ways
Within this modern glare and fever-blight,
This blasting air? And yet there grow as bright
Now, as of old, the imperishable bays.
Fair was the Past—how fair! and yet it seems
Fair, too, this age of iron could be drawn,
For it hath mighty glories and great dreams
And powers, and a light that is as dawn
To futures golden with far richer themes
Than poet ever sang on Tempe's lawn.

LOOMS OF LIFE

TO WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Pale Orpheus of the Celt! thy music pure
Strikes flame once more to Erin's vanished light,
A flame whose soaring tongues shall wreck the
night
That walled her shores. Shall not these notes
endure?—

This rapture of clear harps that thrills the
stones
And wakes the saddened sods of thy lorn land?—
Of which thou art a bulwark, and thy tones
Æolian breath to fire her heart and hand.

AND YET—

Art thou not some illusive, moon-white ghost?—
Some exhalation from the fair, dead form
Of a long-buried and Earth-banished fay
Whom ne'er thy lustre cold, nor querulous host
Of phantoms shall revive? This Age's storm
Canst thou endure, and blaze of living day?

LOOMS OF LIFE

ACME!

Eternal speech framed by the planets' tongue!
Stir me with music of the primal morn
That woke the worlds when first the sun was
borne
Exultant past his subject spheres that hung
Like ore the night imperious had wrung
Living from cosmic quarries, and had worn
Extinguished on her brow. Her shadow, shorn,
Crumbled when Day his flaming javelin flung.

Roaming I sought that light of great release,
So it might loose me from the clouds that
swept
Westward my years of youth and brought no
peace
Ever to my red heart that clomb and crept
Eager on Love's far quest that could not cease
Till by his torch my steps stood intercept.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SCULPTURED INDIAN

(In the Bohemian Grove, California)

Image of the vanished tribes, this tree's enormous
hollow,
Holds thee as thou starest West.
When, O silent chieftain, shall thy phantom foot-
steps follow
Them to Manitou and rest?

Never from the dim aisles of this sombre-shad-
owed valley
Roamest thou, O lonely one!
Brave, for thee the chase is done, and done the
battle-sally;
The warrior-dance is done.

In thy red-shafted forest now an alien tongue is
waking;
Faces strange surround the feast,
But never to thy patient eyes shall dawn for thee
come breaking,
Since thy night fell from the East.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Abide, stern, steadfast sentinel, so long as in this
forest,
Lifts each towering tree by tree;
Thou bearest gifts of grace to us for ills that
smite us sorest,
Ills that force us to the knee.

Thy bronzen hands hold all we lost, the heritage
of ages—
Son of Strength, we thank thee for
This magic of thy woods and winds—this glory of
old pages
From the tome of Nature's lore.

THE PÆAN OF THE POPPIES

Sprent from the hands of Spring,
The golden seed is falling
O'er meadows loud with light,
And hills that harvest bring
When warm the winds go calling
The poppies up from night,
Restoring Earth her sight.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The mountains sway with flame
Where the frail glories tremble,—
Fair fallen stars of fire!
The valleys green acclaim
The legions that assemble
In royal robe and tire.
With timbrel, shawm and quire.

Stained with the ruby's wine,
Gilt by the sunset lustre,
Swung by the sunset breeze,—
So do their beakers shine,
So flare their crowns in clusters,
So bow across the leas
Like beacons o'er the seas.

Afar in darker lands
I feel their kisses burning
As sweet, uncertain lips,
As faint, unhindered hands
Are felt by exiles yearning
On shores when tears eclipse
The wan and westering ships.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE SIERRA SNOW-PLANT

Thou growest in eternal snows
As flower never grew;—
The sun upon thy beauty throws
No kiss—the dawn no dew.

Thou knowest not the love-warm marl
Of Earth, but dead and white
The wastes wherein thy roots ensnarl
Ere thou art freed in light.

Where blighted dawns, with twilight blent,
Die pale, thou liftest strong,
A tongue of crimson eloquent
With one unceasing song.

Thou glowest like an angel's thought
Or like a poet's word;
Thy perfect peace is stirred by naught,
By naught thy dream is stirred.

More deeply dark than dyes that burn
The Gorgon's foaming vein,
Thy calyx-bells are red that turn
No leaves aloft for rain.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Didst pierce, thou rash, ensanguined spear
The Galilean's side
On Golgotha, and bleedest here
By penance glorified?

From visions bright of worlds that lie
Where fairer stars may glow,
Bringst thou some secret of the sky
Which man may never know?

Serene thy smile, past plaint or plea,
On star-surrendered heights
Where alps Sierran loom o'er thee
And huge, companioned nights.

O Life in vasts of Death! O Flame
That thrills the stark expanse;—
Let Love and Longing be thy name!—
Love and Renunciance.

THE CALIFORNIAN POPPY.

Thou seem'st an ember from the sun,
A topaz from the mine.
Tell, poppy, on what looms were spun
Those fragile robes of thine?

LOOMS OF LIFE

Thy trembling torch ignites the hills
To youth,—then opens gold
Thy grail whereinto morning spills
A tear thou canst not hold.

There cannot bide one lonely tear
In thy red heart aglow
With blood that never pales with fear
Such as hearts human know.

Thy sisters far in mystic lands
Their dream-drowned chalice keep,
And mould with dim, phantasmal hands
Weird, necromantic sleep.

Yet thou art fairer than their dreams,
O poppy of the West,
For Beauty seeks thee garbed in gleams
That make her manifest.

'Tis meet thy foliate gold should shine
Beneath these Titan trees;
'Tis meet thy cup should sing with wine
By these Pacific seas.

LOOMS OF LIFE

For gold and wine and sunset dye
Thy beauty's crown triune,
Yet rouse the sad eternal sigh
That beauty fades too soon.

O more than emblem of the State
Where all thy glamour springs,
For thou art emblem of the fate
Of Earth's most lovely things.

MARY OF MILRONE

(A Simple American Border Ballad of the
Southwest)

I shot him where the Rio flows;
I shot him when the moon arose,
And where he lies the vulture knows
Along the Tinto River.

In schools of Eastern cities pale,
My cloistered flesh began to fail;
They bore me where the deserts quail
To winds from out the sun.

LOOMS OF LIFE

I looked upon the land and sky,
Nor hoped to live nor feared to die,
And from my hollow breast a sigh
Fell o'er the burning waste.

But strong I grew and tall I grew;
I drank the region's balm and dew,—
It made me lithe in limb and thew—
How swift I rode and ran!

How oft it was my joy to ride
Over the sand-blown ocean wide,
While, ever smiling, at my side
Rode Mary of Milrone.

A flood of hornèd heads before,
The trampled thunder, smoke and roar
Of full four thousand hoofs or more—
A cloud, a sea, a storm.

O wonderful the desert gleamed!
Man and woman, we spoke and dreamed
Of Love-in-Life till the white wastes seemed
Like the Plains of Paradise.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Her eyes with Love's great magic shone,—
"Be mine, O Mary of Milrone,—
Thy hand, thy heart be all mine own!"
Her lips made sweet response:

"I love thee,—yes, for thou art he
Who from the East should come to me—
And I have waited long!" O, we
Were happy as the sun!

There came upon a hopeless quest,
With hell and hatred in his breast,
A stranger who his love confest
To Mary long in vain.

To me she spake: "O chosen mate,
His eyes are terrible with fate,—
I fear his love, I fear his hate—
I fear some looming ill!"

Then to the church we twain did ride;
I kissed her as she rode beside.
How fair!—how passing fair my bride
With gold combs in her hair!

LOOMS OF LIFE

Before the Spanish priest we stood
Of San Gregorio's Brotherhood—
A shot rang out! and in her blood
My blue-eyed darling lay.

O God! I carried her beside
The Virgin's altar where she cried,—
Smiling upon me ere she died:
"Adieu, my love, adieu!"

I knelt before Saint Mary's shrine,
And held my dead bride's hand in mine,
"Vengeance," I cried, "O Lord, be Thine,
But I Thy minister!"

I kissed her thrice and sealed my vow,—
Her eyes, her sea-cold lips and brow,—
"Farewell! my heart is dying now,
O Mary of Milrone!"

Then swift upon my steed I leapt;
My streaming eyes the desert swept;
I saw the accursèd where he crept
Against the blood-red sun.

LOOMS OF LIFE

I galloped straight upon his track,
And nevermore my eyes looked back;
The world was barred with red and black;
My heart was a flaming coal.

Through the delirious twilight dim
And the blank night I followed him;
Hills did we cross and rivers swim,
My fleet-foot horse and I.

The morn burst red, a gory wound,
O'er iron hills and savage ground,
And there was never another sound
Save the beat of my horse's hoofs.

Unto the murderer's ear they said:
"Thou'rt of the dead!—thou'rt of the dead!"
Still on his stallion black he fled
With death on his path behind.

Fiery dust from the blasted plain
Burnt like lava in every vein,
But I rode on with a steady rein,
Though the fierce sand-devils spun.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Then to a sullen land we came,
Whose earth was brass, whose sky was flame;
I made it balm with her blessed name
In the Land of Mexico.

With gasp and groan my poor horse fell—
Last of all things that loved me well!
I turned my head—a smoking shell
Veiled me his dying throes.

But fast on vengeful foot was I;
His steed fell, too, and was left to die;
He fled where a river's channel dry
Made way to the rolling stream.

Red as my rage the huge sun sank;
My foe bent low on the river's bank
And deep of the kindly flood he drank,
While the giant stars broke forth.

Then face to face and man to man,
I fought him where the river ran,
Where the trembling palm held up its fan
And the emerald serpents lay.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The mad, remorseless bullets broke
From tongues of flame in the sulphur-smoke;—
The air was rent till the desert spoke
To the echoing hills afar.

Hot from his lips the curses burst;—
He fell!—the sands were slaked of thirst;
A stream in the stream ran dark at first,
And the stones grew red as hearts.

I shot him where the Rio flows;
I shot him when the moon arose,
And where he lies the vulture knows
Along the Tinto River.

But where *she* lies, to none is known,
Save my poor heart and a lonely stone
On which I sit and weep alone
Where the cactus-stars are white.

Where *I* shall lie no man shall say,
The flowers all are fallen away;
The desert is so drear and gray,
O Mary of Milrone!

LOOMS OF LIFE

HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS

Nature once heaved her mountains' heads aloft,
So we, her children, might on them respire
Her airs serene and pure, immune from mire
Of valleys and their highways trodden soft
By herds oblivious to the stars and skies
And the white heights of yearning. Haughty
peaks,
Oh, he alone shall mount you, he who seeks,
August with anger, from dark roads to rise.

ARCHITEKTON

Let us be Master-builders—not alone
Builders, but Masters let us strive to be,
And raise our temples to Futurity
In spirit as in everlasting stone.

Creators true to mind, may still the soul
Of Beauty rule us and our fanes erect!—
A sovereign Artist is the Architect
And Master of the Dream-inspired Whole.

LOOMS OF LIFE

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Upon the peaks of his proud labor flares
Not yet the light that charms the myriad eye;
Serene they pierce Time's undivulgent airs
And bide their dawn from out a younger sky,

Till some revealing orb shall heave its spears
And loose the lips enchanted in the stone—
Then shall old ruins topple, and all ears
Of Earth be startled with a thunder tone.

The voice of Zarathustra from the crag
Shall ring o'er regions red with human rust;
From their embattled walls his word shall drag
Eidolons grim of epochs gray with dust.

But now the clouds immerse the Titan—hark!
His iron footsteps and their echoes vast
Crashing across the Age's cloistered dark
And trampling down the gods that held the
Past!

LOOMS OF LIFE

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

(A new Translation from Goethe's Faust)

*The Lord. The Heavenly Legions, then
Mephistopheles.
The Three Archangels advance.*

RAPHAEL:

In olden wise the sun is blending
With brother-spheres his rival song,
And now with thunder-tread is ending
His predetermined journey long.
His aspect gives the angels power,
Though none his secret fathom may,
The mystic orbs of splendor shower
Their light as on the primal day.

GABRIEL:

And swift with swiftness unabating,
The Earth revolves her glory bright,—
Elysian lustre alternating
With deep and terror-mantled night.

LOOMS OF LIFE

The ocean foams in broadest surges
And up the towering cliffs it rears,
And cliffs and seas sweep on where urges
The swift, eternal flight of spheres.

MICHAEL:

And tempests roaring and contending
From sea to land, from land to sea,
Weave, in their rage, a chain expending
Afar its potent empery.
The path before the thunder clearing,
Now flashing desolations play,—
Yet here Thy servants, Lord, revering
The mild mutations of Thy day.

THE THREE:

The vision gives the angels power,
Since none Thy being fathom may,
And all Thy orbs of splendor shower
Their light as on the primal day.

LOOMS OF LIFE

A DEDICATION

Mundane Muse—White Lady Mine!
Take this tribute, wholly thine;
Take this sheaf of morning song,—
 It is all the Past can give;
My fairer, richer fields belong
 To thee—and I must live
To bind their harvest wealth and lay
 It safe from burning and from blight,
Before thy feet while it is day
 And day is golden in our sight;
While leaping Time still laughs with us,
And young Earth blooms miraculous,
And Life is watered with the spring
 That bids me labor still and sing.

THE QUEST AT END

In white light of the day-star
 Darting down its ardent beams,—
Till the white became a gray star,
 I walked within my dreams.

LOOMS OF LIFE

In haunting of the moonlight
Shaking all its silver staves,
I sought a ghost within the night
By old forgotten graves.

'Neath roadways of the giant
Solar zones enlaced as one,
Where seed of suns and gygrant
Fogs of fire teemed and spun.

By pale and astral powers
Calling on a spirit blest,
'Mid ashen tombs and towers,
I wandered on my quest.

By comet-flame I wandered
Where it plunged with glaring shroud,—
The wingèd years I squandered
And cried a name aloud.

Never Night nor her rolling,
Argent lusters o'er my head,
Nor my thin voice, nor the tolling
Of bells awoke my dead.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Then fans of dawn-glow fired
The clouds to golden spume;—
Mine eyes in gloom expired,
In massy deeps of gloom.

In the dew on a lowly
Mound of grass I fell a-swoon,
All my senses lulled in holy
Veils with Lethe-waters strewn.

I wakened when a twilight
Burned along its reach of flame;
My lips lay on a flower bright—
And that flower bore her name.

BIANCA

Bianca! Bianca!
Thine eyes are like a Sybil's eyes,
For they are molten with the night;
They hold a strange, sequestered light
That to some golden future flies
From out some golden past;
Yea, they are overcast—
Bianca!

With mystery and stellar sheen,
Liquescent, calm and vespertine!

LOOMS OF LIFE

Bianca! Bianca!

Thy mouth is like a muse's mouth
Of coral to a flageolet—

A chanting muse whose lips are wet
With nectar never knowing drouth,
And when, immersed in dreams,
Their music stifled seems,

Bianca!

They make a living lute that hoards
Old memories in its silent chords.

Bianca! Bianca!

Shouldst thou unleash thy trammled hair,
And crown thee with a myrtle crown,
And sable torrents rushing down,
Blot ivory shoulders warm and bare,
Lo! pipes of Pan would call
Thee to his festival,

Bianca!

And thou wouldst dance away and leave
The saddened world and me to grieve.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE MOON DAMOZEL

The moon her silver sickle lifts
As though to shear the phantom thread
That binds the live world to the dead,
Yvonne!

See, through the rifts
Of plunging clouds she darts and drifts—
Yvonne! O Yvonne!

She haunts and hounds us through the grove;
Thou lingerest, thou growest cold;
Thou growest strangely still and old,
Yvonne!

Thine eyeballs rove.
What demon comes to plague thee, love?
Yvonne! O Yvonne!

Thy face grows stone like yonder sphere
Of ghostly ashes, dust and death.
Thy breath is not a mortal's breath,
Yvonne!

Thine eyes no tear
Unloose—thou starest nor dost hear,
Yvonne! O Yvonne!

LOOMS OF LIFE

On the cold, blasted orb thine eyes
Glare petrified with awful power:
Alas! for us this is the hour,

Yvonne!

That our love dies.

The living sink,—the dead arise,
Yvonne! O Yvonne!

Go, spirit, seek thy planet dread;
The slavery of thy spells is past,
The dim, sad sphere is overcast,

Yvonne!

And on thy head

And mine, Love's blooms droop sere and dead,
Yvonne! O Yvonne!

LOOMS OF LIFE

RUSSIA AGONISED

MCMV

Unhappy land! thy heavens with horrors hung,
Reveal no promise of a day; thy plains
Shake in each grassy blade rebellious swords
Sprung from the mad root of Revolt; thy peaks
In protest cry more awful than the tongues
Of seers on winds of ashen yestermorns.
Thy cities scream in blood, and on their domes
Of empire glares red desolating light [seas
Launched from the pyres of doom. Thy stained
Roll dark to Death's horizons and are thronged
With hostile apparitions vast with ruin,
And Havoc riots 'round thy wintry walls.
So fated fell, since fated long to fall, [sides
Thy wave-borne armaments, though close their
Compassed with flame, armored and reinforced
With triple steel and round with thunders ringed,
Yet futile flashed their bolts, by hands enslaved
Directed on their resolute enemy.

Low lie thy citadels impregnable [stones
That seemed, and so had been, were all their
Buttressed by freemen's hearts and not by hands
Of bondmen, were not ravelins and redoubts,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Or gluttoned guns or swords their sole defense,
But Liberty's great Word—that power which
Of every heart a host, of every host [makes
Unconquered multitudes thrice multiplied.

How still on Asian wastes thine armies rest,
O Russia! In those alien fields afar
What sleep lies on those legions harnessed once
In pomp and panoply of battle! Spurred
With warlike hauteur huge, they spread athwart
The trampled leagues in fluttering shadows cast
From banners burning terribly with wrath
And pallid flames of swords! They seemed wide
Of clashing corn, stalwart beneath the sun [fields
And valiant in the shade of trees. Then sank
Destruction and the air was wild with wings
Of liberated lives and wet the ground
With many rains of red that on Death's couch
Lay heavy. Now the might of Muscovy
Cumbers the richening sod whose delving worm
Holds revels on its pride. And the great sun
Sends salvoes of his beams athwart those plains,
Saluting peace, when his recurrent morns
On desolation burst.

LOOMS OF LIFE

If yet with arms
Resistance seek revenge, or if defeat
Piled on defeat no counsel lend, if pride
Clear paths for massacre, or folly throw
The sanguine ports to slaughter open wide
In the Manchurian lands,—if in these things
Declared, no wiser word for thee is carved
Full on thy brow, O broken government,
Then art thou wholly doomed. Doomed though
the sands
Of Volga were outnumbered by the lives
That wait in hecatombs on sacrifice
Yet minish never,—doomed though Ural's peaks
Turned giants and for thee bestrode those zones
Thou covetest, and doubly doomed though all
Thy coasts were adamant with treasure massed,
And gold thy long-drawn shores. So tyranny
Is weakest still in that whereon her might
She bases, and the brands her vassals wield
Are rushes to her foes, but steel to her.

Full to thy front thy children rise, and dread
And holy is the wrath that masters them,
By angels urged,—wrath that shall master thee,
Albeit the pavements of thy capitols

LOOMS OF LIFE

Are faint beneath their slaughtered, and the snows
Of far Siberian wastes engulf thy sons. [chill,
Though woeful whips and chains and dungeons
Or midnights of infernal mines thine arms
Remorseless be, vain is their service dire!
Though veiled and ikon-guarded shrines a-gloom
With superstition and the blinding craft
Of priests may over despotism cast
Anointing oils divine and bless with breath
Of sanctity its abhorrent head and brow,
Black with a nation's woe, yet is its fall
Announced in terror's thunders now unpent
In yon red heavens with awful scriptures stamped.
There floods of marshalled doom brim down the
Enwombing ills unknown. [skies

Awry thy pomp
On its marmorean pillars leans, while Fear
Feeds on thy palace walls and, shaking, hears
Thy millions muttering on all the winds.
The generation's surges take on crests
And whiten, by no captaincy controlled,
By age-gray wrong aroused, by misery scourged,
To madness. Lo, they mount to overwhelm
With wrath, the thrones of Tyranny upreared

LOOMS OF LIFE

On bases steep with clamor and in blood
Submerged and tears that only blood can quell.
The sum of crescent ages hath annulled
With light thy iron barriers set with hate
Within Progression's path, hath raised from
More humane than thy laws, the incubus [hearts
Of night thy hands imposed, O riven realm.

Yet bright as standards waving in thy North,
Whose glory stirs the snows with vagrant fire,
So yet for thee, to wisdom reconciled,
The flames of torn Odessa may be dawn
Of greatness that builds not on leagues of land,
But always on that Liberty whose star
Is safeguard of all empire. So erect
Thy state upon humanity, so lay
Its fundamentals in Freedom, its defense
In men's enfranchised hands that never foe
Nor age shall gnaw its fabric into dust.
From shallows and dark shoals of adverse fate,
Tremendous with thy loss, may fountains spring
Of good, thee not alone, but all mankind
To quicken and refreshen. May that thought
Which hath thy glory been if not thy guide,
Still shoot new fibres through the families
Of men and bind as brothers many a race

LOOMS OF LIFE

Extended to the dwindling margins dim
Of the green world. So shall thy virile veins,
All inexhaustibly regenerate,
Flow on till Life's defoliated tree
Trembles with all its ultimate bright fruit,
The seraph's heritage, the gods' great dower,
Unending Peace, Earth's bridal-kiss with Time.

SOULS OF MEN ASUNDER

Chill the poisoned winds and dank that o'er the
world are blowing,

Shake with frost a breast that feels thy breath
in all.

Evermore shall friendship's singing streams be-
tween us flowing,

Once with love and laughter golden, run with
gall.

Long to me shall now, alas, the grieving surge
of Ocean

Drone with lonely tides lamenting on this
shore,—

'Mid that wreck of hearts and dreams and shells
of dead emotion,

Where those pearls we gathered? gathered
now no more.

LOOMS OF LIFE

Fair our habitation shone, with mouths of music
fluent,

Pure of love created, o'er the stormy coasts;
Hollow lies the house and all its melody fled
truant;

Chambers hiss with adders, windows gleam
with ghosts.

Stars have burst while vast in thirst the reddened
leagues lay parching;

Realms have sunk, and torn with tears were
nations' eyes;

Armies flamed and perished while their glory
kept on marching,

Yet the faith we held it died not,—now it dies.

Wider than the world is—wearier than the floods
that sunder,

Fall our paths apart on Earth nor meet again.
Old and cold the legend and its end is woe and
wonder,

Havoc's heel in hearts, and dust of Death, and
Pain.

LOOMS OF LIFE

HOW COULD MEN HATE THEE, LUCIFER?

Son of the Morning, thou whose arm erects
Full o'er yon Orient wastes thy towering torch,
A pharos guiding argosies of dawn
Up through the ruins of the night,—we mark
Athwart the plinths of Heaven implacable,
Thy seraph head unbowed! Unbowed thy form,
In glimmering outline traced and phosphor glow,
Beneath its burthen of damnation thrones
Full on Earth's proudest peak, nor yet thy feet—
Worn feet! that toil o'er planetary ways,
Kiss of that Earth disdain, so loved by thee.
How could men hate thee, Lucifer? Not thee
Rash coals of wrath unquenchable impelled
To huge rebellion, but solicitude
And charitable intent unto man.
What could deter thee from thy task benign,
O Bearer of the Light, though on thy head
Exile fell heaped and iron punishment,
Loss of the olden bliss and sorrowful doom?
Foe wast thou but to Night and Ignorance;
Thy ray rent all their palls, their curtains torn
Sank cowering in collapse, and man rose free

LOOMS OF LIFE

To shrine in temples of the intellect
Th' untrammelled thought. Fear lived no more
When frailty fell! Far nobler fate to err
In freedom's light supreme than doubt or pray
In charmed darkness. Thou, O Lucifer,
Art figure less of Evil than of Sorrow,
Nor bearest Light alone, but Love also,
Since both, co-ordinate with good in thee,
Not in their essences contend but one
Are and inseparate remain. So one
With thee in nature and in glory's crown,
Thy mortal sons, nor less their doom decreed
Than thine, those beacon-bearers through the
When massy and cohorted Ignorance [glooms,
Sat battlemented by dark books and turned
The iron leaves with crimson fingers dipt
In cores of starry lives. Victorious long,
These minions of the midnight and the dusk,
Ere shattered by the illuminating lance
That on their numberless proud summits fell.

Like thee thy sons first taught that brains could
beam
And spirit shine, and built of ashlar up
The dawn-tipt turrets and pavilions bright
Whereon burnt cresset-fires for Pioneers

LOOMS OF LIFE

Of Light their thankless labors to illumine.
For thankless, thankless still, O Lucifer,
The labors of the Light, with hatred paid,
With pain, with persecution paved along
Their dolor's path, with thorns, with hunger's
teeth,
With flints of shame, with death and frenzied
fires
Insatiably fed, with swords and gyves
Laid on the limbs of pale, tormented Truth,
And dungeon-dusks to overwhelm her ray
That cannot die. Ever such fate hath fallen
On spirits lustre-fraught, since first deposed
From noons of state ineffable in Heaven,
'Mid acmes rapt of archangelic awe,
The skies precipitous absorbed thy plunge
Immense that down the empyrean lay.
Calcined to ash, Heaven's zones burned bright
with thee,
Till in this nether dome lay terminate
Thy course and whelmed the lords of dawn's
domain
Where thou in vast magnificence art now
Throned Monarch of the Morning.

LOOMS OF LIFE

What of him,
Titan of noblest heart, of fable old,
Prometheus, who on stormy Caucasus,
Lies o'er bleak leagues of granite, fast in chains
By Hermes forged remorseless, and endures
Intolerable torment and the bird
Of dreadful beak? Though long the winters
 white
Build up their emerald and crystal walls
With guards of glassy spears, though skies of
 slate
Pile snows on snows upon him, till his form
Marks eminences strange along the peaks
Of that wild range, or suns their malice dart
Through the insufferable summers on his flesh
Exposed, yet never the harsh, arid airs
Lift up his plaint to Jove—no wail, no plaint
Ascends, the exulting tyrant to appease.
But oft his agony's red couch, though big
With sufferings ultimate, grows strangely soft,—
Then, lo, the heartless stones start into flowers
Of clasping petals pure, enstarred with dew,
While the exhaling rose upon his wounds
Breathes balms and essences of sighs. He smiles
Upon the dreams that men, his children, joy,—

LOOMS OF LIFE

Fruit of his travail consummate, though paid
By him with many a pang. So mounts his thought
Triumphant and his wan face wings a smile
Up to the thunder's throne and looming Zeus.

How could men hate thee, though the gods do
hate?

Remote in distance and on heights remote
Dwell they who thence deliver unto man
Lumens of soul, since ever Light must seek,
Or ineffectual its radiance falls,
The solitude of peaks exalt and chill,
Where thrones aerial lift and fence their calms
With silence from the Earth-enveloping winds
That there may never war.

Bearers of Light

Immortal, even ye who higher climb
The Earthen eminence than those you bless
With glorious gift, none other lot await,
None other meed than Lucifer's or doom
Of the bold, fettered Titan. Isolate
In unsunder of your souls, immune
From injury on far heights of soaring thought
Piled firm, and 'mid incomparable climes

LOOMS OF LIFE

Of contemplation fixed, yet may you smile
Unshaken in serenity that holds
Not change, nor joy, nor suffering. Yet it holds
A sadness like the sea's or his who casts
About him oft the mourning of the clouds
With all their tears, that deeper grief to hide
From which shall nevermore exempted be
All dreamers and all souls whose sovereign sight
Is lustre undefeated, though new dawns
Drown in their cumulative floods the beams,
No less eternal, of each vanward star.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE IRON VIRGIN

(In the Five-Cornered Tower at Nuremberg)

A Satire

"Here," cried the Keeper's daughter, "here she stands—

The Iron Virgin in the dungeon-gloom;
Mark her sweet, placid smile,—you see, no hands

Hath she to tear her victims to their doom,
But she hath handles,"—here she opened wide

The hellish engine on its hinges old
That groaned as once the wretches groaned in-
side,—

And all my leaping blood stood stricken cold.
"These are the spikes that entered at the eyes

Where entered light no more,—this one with
rust

Corroded, pierced the bursting throat whose cries
Soared to the sobbing angels, let us trust.

And those that sank into the breast are three;—

(Observe they miss the heart)—these four the
veins

Transfixed, and lest that death too sudden be,

Slowly they closed the hollow shell with chains.

LOOMS OF LIFE

When all at length was still and blood unstopt
From the remorseless iron ran and wept,
Sheer on great, mangling knives the body dropt
And shooting streams the fragments downward
swept
Low to the river,—and nor man nor place
Knew more of them who knew the Maid's
embrace."

More cruel this Virgin than the Sirens three
Or the devouring Sphinx whose lips were
stained
With lives of men,—and yet it seems to me
The cruelest of the cruel have remained.
For we have many virgins, nor are they,
Nor is their virtue formed of iron quite;
They smile as sweetly and they smile away,
And they have hands—a left one and a right.
Yea, hands have they—"how happy if we mote
Into the arms of woman straightway fall
Sans need to fall into her hands!"—so wrote
He who is greatest, wittiest of all
The living wits. The Jungfrau's red caress
Was terrible—and yet she granted death,
But these our virgins are more pitiless,—
With them the mangled victim keeps his breath.

LOOMS OF LIFE

His eyes they poniard till the wretch crawls blind,
 Within his throat his fluttering tongue they
 nail,
And through his breast a hundred irons grind
 Their way from fairest hands that never fail
To strike the heart. They break it, and then tear
 With pearly teeth his body into bands.
(True, what a blessing to poor man it were
 Might woman be divested of her hands.)
No river hides his tortured flesh, but he
 Is scourged into the world all bitter-bright,—
There ridicule heaps high his agony,
 And leaves him naked to the winds and night,
To die a thousand times—a thousand times
 This passion and this cold embrace to feel
Of these automata, these iron mimes,
 These shells malevolent of brass or steel,
These empty figures fair that know no sin
 And are all smiles without and cruelty within.

There hung this crushing humor in the air,
 As from the Five-Coigned Tower swift I fled.
Peace bide with thee, my brother,—O beware
 All virgins—living, moribund or dead!

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE LAND OF ALABASTER

The sunset burned across the shackled clouds,
A bar of tyrannous and angry red;
The solar king, wrapped gloomily in shrouds,
Drew sackcloth o'er his old and humbled head.

Gaunt stood the trees o'er meadows paved with
snow;
Their shadows crept like ghosts begot of light
And perished where the smouldering winter glow
Made way for dense invasions of the night.

So hewn in alabaster lie the hills;
The victor flakes upon the roofs and rocks
Shine wonderful. Now tinkling music fills
This land of snow and silence as the flocks

Creep homeward o'er the mute marmoreal palls
Unbroken and immense that stretch and gleam;
The blue smoke towers o'er the roofs, then falls
The hand of Conqueror Night upon the dream.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE FORGING OF THE RINGS

An Epithalamium

Eros am I! Created things
I melt, I shape with flaming wings.
So steel, though stubborn stiff with fire,
Trembles, glows, and feels desire;
So ice upon the water's breast
Roars, and rends its armored rest,
And bronzen shapes of gods, or men
Of marble flush to flesh as when
Stones from out Deukalion's hands
Sprang to young and lusty bands,
 New and naked in the light,
Or Music reared on Theban sands
 Tall fanes all wondrous white.
Kinglier might than kings I hold;
 Creation's primal cause
 Lies graven in my laws,
And this green, tiny world I fold
 Close with wings of Day and Dark—
I, who am Nature's Hierarch.

Light was Chaos' pristine smile;
 I was Chaos' pristine song;

LOOMS OF LIFE

Her globes liquescent quickened while
I goaded them along.
Oceans are but slaves to moons;
Moons to worlds are vassals bound;
Worlds must follow suns around
To my all-compellant tunes
Spun from undeciphered runes.

Flame! myriads of millions
Of suns beyond the scope of suns!
Mine the power that links them, mine
Their fire, and mine the splendor
Of giant spheres that shine,
Male in magnificence,
On swooning moons whose tender
Frail glow is recompense
For light their virgin fields absorb
From each enormous master-orb.
These subject to my will I hold,
Controlling who am uncontrolled
Through all the hours;—
Of all the powers
Remaining youngest of the young,
Yet oldest of the old.
The myth from Hellas sprung,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Decked me with name of Eros—name
That holds my earthly fame alone
But not my cosmic fame,
Refulgent to a farther zone.

My fateful anvil throws
Its ruby o'er the stars;
There forge I joys and woes,
And love that makes or mars.
Music smitten from the steel,
Floats in many a waving wheel,
Which, strong and clear,
Gods only hear,
And mortals only feel.
So speeds the forging of the rings:—
Love, singing, swiftly smites the gold, and smit-
ing, sweetly sings:

Gold in beauty's glamour rolled!
Light of loveliness, unfold!
Small, smiling sun, yet glorious, re-risen,
Delivered unto day from rock-ribbed gloom,
Over what vales victorious? what prison,
Gold of the gentle glow,—what mountain's
womb

LOOMS OF LIFE

Of clustered spars,
Or crystal bars
Coffined thy rays in clasping ore?
Till some sharp bolt, in thunder sent,
The startled crypts in sunder rent
And double day within thy cavern bore?
Fair fruit of Earth, for human fate,
Bright emblems of eternity
Shall be fashioned out of thee.
Nor curse of coin, nor cæsar's crowns, nor tires
of state.

Let percussive hammers mould
Thee to circlets twain, O gold.
Impassioned, yielding metal, far too mellow,
In thee a strain of iron must be bound,
A silvern flux must settle as its fellow,
And strength with purity as one compound.
So twain and twin,
The rings begin
To scatter light upon the wind,
And murmur forth a golden note
That wizards sere and olden mote
Have woven from the mystic airs of Ind
To lash a seraph's heart aflame

LOOMS OF LIFE

Once, once to taste an earthly kiss!
With promised pregnancies of bliss
The heavenly hoops lie done and seize a fairer
name.

Gleaming rings of Wedlock, great
With love, with mystery, with fate!
In you what hope from mortal vision hidden,
Hints of long generations yet to grow
From two who at Love's portal stand unbidden,
Led by the fairest dream the heart can know?
And though malign
Or blest the sign
That burns in prophet-flame above,
With bliss or woe for distant days,
Think but of the insistent lays
From hearts athrob with pulsing harps of Love.
From tabernacled lamps a ray
Falls far where unborn spirits shine
Beyond the years—an endless line,
Beyond the all-crowning kiss—beyond the nup-
tial day.

Servant cirques that Life ordains
For links in its successive chains,

LOOMS OF LIFE

Binding with bands eternal, man and woman,
So that two destinies know but one path,
And all that is supernal or is human,
On Earth a two-fold day and duty hath,—
Ye aureate rounds
Ye span the bounds
'Twixt soul and clay, 'twixt hearts and hands,
And purify with finer flame,
And bless with a diviner name
The impulse and the law that naught with-
stands;—
Ye lay on Passion spells of Peace,
And are its riches and reward
Which swords of seraphim must guard
From hungry Time's annulling rage that bans the
world's increase.

Hark! the melody that clinks
Pure from those portentous links!
It darts within the elements rejoicing,
It trembles in the throats of thrilling bells,
Whose tongues, soon stirred to eloquence, are
voicing
O'er flights of clouds, the happiness that wells,
And rolling mounts
From raptured founts

LOOMS OF LIFE

Of wine within each leaping heart
Whose floods with dyes of gladness glow
Till they a noble madness know,
While Fancy snares the brain with siren art.
Burn, happy, happy day thy light
In azure o'er this hallowed pair!
For two so young, for two so fair,
O lend thy smile to Even, O lend thy joy to
Night.

But another note ye own,
Rings, of harsh, repellant tone,
Like iron struck to clamorous outcrying;
Then both your burnished bands grow tyrant
chains,
Your soft'ning song, your amorous deep sighing
Are dumb with rusten dolours and sore pains.
For cursèd they
Who burn away
With lust or strife your mild alloy,—
Reverting unto mordant gyves,
You gnaw their waste discordant lives
And canker all the yearning rose of Joy.
You fether heart, you fether soul,

LOOMS OF LIFE

You fling a venom on the air,
And Misery, mute in marble there,
Hath Age for its ally and Ruin for its goal!

O ye whose warm, responsive hands
Lock with those from shadow-lands
Beyond Night's moors or meadows of the morn-
ing,
'Twixt dead and unborn races intervene
On litten heights your shadows, Life adorning
Where noon-tide parts the seeing and unseen.
A race shall rise
'Neath future skies
From flames that bloom within your breasts;
For you who pause on Aidenn's hills
A moment ere this cadence stills,
And Earth once more grows gray before her
guests,
Are stones of Atlantean piles
Advancing tribes rear over Death,
Bequeathing mind and blood and breath,
Where fast o'er Time's destroying sea, Love lifts
his shining isles.

LOOMS OF LIFE

THE STORM-NIGHT

All the moonless night the strong
Hissing levins lanced the steeps,
And the throats of thunder long
Bellowed o'er the smoking deeps
Whence the shaggy crags were rent
As the storm their forests bent,
Like the crowns of kings in woe.

Black I saw the charging cloud
Fraught with fire against the peak,
Saw it wrecked with tumult loud,
Loosing all its bolts to wreak
Vengeance on the gulfs inane,
But its flashing brands in vain
Plunged and blazed within the pit.

Overhead with hollow roar,
Rolled the mangled wastes of night,
Filled with voices rude that tore
Down the firmamental height
To the Earth a sullen path
For the waters launched in wrath
And the winds. All winds were there!

LOOMS OF LIFE

Yea, the winds on giant reeds
Blew, and called the cliffs to come
With the whirlwinds on their steeds
To this Pandemonium.
How their hulks heaved in the dark!
Like the Flood beneath the Ark,
To an organ-octave vast.

Bowed my heart unto their thrill,
And my lips were loosed to shout,
I grew brother to the hill
And the storm-shape's whirling rout.
So, on tides of thunder tost,
I, immersed in strife and lost,
Joyed the elemental war!

Then mine arms invoked profounds
Where swart demons of the dark
Shaped me gods from sights and sounds,
Till great Peace, the Hierarch,
From his throne called unto Dis
Brooding o'er the mad abyss,
And my pagan soul grew still.

Sank the winds. Each phalanx grim
Of the battling clouds withdrew,

LOOMS OF LIFE

And the cloven peaks that dim
Fret the shores of pendant blue,
Through the smiling world upsoared
While the lingering stars adored
Morn in majesty revealed.

Soon the new-born ray of Dawn
Burnt upon the Orient range,
And my yearning soul was drawn
To my brethren, mute and strange.
Through the pure and vibrant air
Mountant sprang the solar flare
As the birds and blooms awoke.

Then to lower vales of light
And the homes and hearts of men,
Burnt my footsteps swift and bright
Down the mountain and the glen.
So I left the heights above,
Longing for the warmer love
Lying on a woman's lips.